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Annual ministerial review: implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to sustainable development

Statement submitted by Goi Peace Foundation, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2008/100.

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Statement

1. Raising the Awareness for Social Entrepreneurship

The Goi Peace Foundation would like to highlight the role of social entrepreneurs and the significance of promoting the global movement of social entrepreneurship, in light of the theme "Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to sustainable development."

First, by way of introduction, the Goi Peace Foundation is an international non-governmental organization headquartered in Tokyo, Japan. In 2004, the Foundation was admitted to special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

In an effort to contribute to the fundamental and sustainable solution of the various global problems and development challenges, the Goi Peace Foundation builds the social environment in which economic prosperity, social justice, environmental sustainability, respect of human rights, and good governance may be nurtured and ensured. It pursues its objectives through lectures, symposia and conferences, research and studies, culture of peace events, international cooperation activities, peace education programs, as well as publications and media projects.

One of the major programs of the Foundation is the Goi Peace Award. The annual award is presented to honor individuals and organizations in various fields that have made outstanding contributions toward the realization of a peaceful and harmonious world for all life on earth.

In 2007, the Goi Peace Award was bestowed on Bill Drayton, Founder and Chair of Ashoka: Innovators for the Public—a global association of over 2000 leading social entrepreneurs, individuals who envision and implement pattern-setting social changes in the environment, education, health, human rights and other areas of human need. The Award was presented to Mr. Drayton in recognition of his visionary leadership in developing a sustainable global society by promoting social entrepreneurship and empowering individuals to become changemakers. Through his dedicated and pioneering work with Ashoka, Mr. Drayton has paved the way for a truly innovative citizen sector to emerge in the 21st century.

2. Social Entrepreneurship – A Key to Sustainable Development

According to Bill Drayton, social entrepreneurs are individuals with innovative solutions to society's most pressing social problems. They tackle major social issues offering new ideas for wide-scale change. Just as entrepreneurs change the face of business, social entrepreneurs act as the change agents for society. These solution-minded pragmatists invent new approaches that create social value, and develop innovative solutions to improve societies for the better. They establish new ventures to deliver goods and services not currently supplied by existing markets. They operate across a spectrum of enterprises, from the purely charitable to the purely commercial, and they prioritize social returns on investment.

Social entrepreneurs are not a new phenomenon and social entrepreneurship is not a new concept, but nowadays, they have gained renewed momentum in a world characterized by a growing divide between the haves and the have-nots. The delivery of social, environmental and ethical value using market-based techniques has a very long history, where innovative individuals have introduced solutions to seemingly intractable social problems, fundamentally improving the lives of countless individuals by changing the way critical systems operate. Florence Nightingale (founder of the first nursing school and developer of modern nursing practices), and Maria Montessori (best known for her method of education of children in use today in a number of public as well as private schools throughout the world), or John Muir (naturalist and conservationist, who established the National Park System and helped found the Sierra Club) offer some prominent historical examples of social entrepreneurs.

One well-known contemporary social entrepreneur is the 2006 Nobel Prize-winner Muhammad Yunus, founder of the Grameen Bank and its growing family of social venture businesses. Muhammad Yunus pilot tested and scaled a new business model to provide microcredit to the world's poorest citizens. His ideas couple capitalism with social responsibility and have changed the face of rural economic and social development. The success of the Grameen model of microfinancing has inspired similar efforts in a hundred countries throughout the developing world and industrialized countries as well. The work of Muhammed Yunus and of the Grameen movement illustrates the enormous synergies and benefits that could be achieved when business principles are unified with social ventures.

Another example of how social entrepreneurship is emerging in diverse areas, consider Victoria Hale and her enterprise OneWorldHealth. Dr. Hale, a pharmaceutical scientist, who launched the world's first non-profit pharmaceutical company, is developing safe, effective and affordable medical solutions in the developing world for people who suffer from infectious diseases but are unserved by mainstream firms.

Or Rory Stewart and his Turquoise Mountain Foundation, which revives ancient Afghan crafts and rebuilds the historic bazaar in Kabul, in order to help preserve the local culture and provide employment and vital income to the people in the region.

Today, social entrepreneurs are working in more than one hundred countries to create opportunity for people who otherwise would stay in poverty and continue facing deprivation. They and their fields of work are as varied as the communities they aim to serve.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the social entrepreneurship movement increasingly gains public visibility and recognition worldwide. New partnerships have been established between social entrepreneurs and the business sector. In particular, the 'New Economy' era spawned new forms of philanthropy, the so-called 'venture philanthropy'. It is indeed not a coincidence that massive support for social entrepreneurs is now coming from wealthy individuals like Bill Gates, Warren Buffet, George Soros, Stephan Schmidheiny, as well as Jeff Skoll. The involvement of these well-connected and highly strategic social investors has

the potential to make a remarkable difference. They have created powerful organizations to identify and support social entrepreneurs around the world.

The involvement of some of the most influential and wealthy people on the planet has played a decisive role. There is an increasingly urgent sense that a new wave of creativity, innovation and entrepreneurial solutions is needed to meet the challenges of reducing poverty, improving environmental stewardship, and boosting social and economic development for all people on the planet. And it is this that leads us to believe that the social entrepreneurship movement can be seen as a massively crucial catalyst for sustainable development.

3. Promoting an International Year for Social Entrepreneurship

The Goi Peace Foundation believes that social entrepreneurs are essential to the restoration of a sustainable planet and the improvement of the lives of billions of people, especially of the lives of 900 million people living in extreme poverty.

The Goi Peace Foundation believes that social entrepreneurs deserve further recognition and support by the international community—by governments as well as multinational companies. Furthermore, the establishment of a strong global partnership between governments, social entrepreneurs and the private sector at the national and international level can be of great benefit to all humanity, especially in promoting sustainable development and implementing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The Goi Peace Foundation believes that multilateral institutions like the United Nations can play a pivotal role in offering a platform for such a global partnership between governments, the private sector, social entrepreneurs and related foundations, creating synergy and maximizing effectiveness of the combined forces.

As an initial step towards furthering the global movement of social entrepreneurship, the Goi Peace Foundation recommends the designation of an International Year for Social Entrepreneurship by the United Nations General Assembly.

The main objectives of the International Year for Social Entrepreneurship would be:

1. To raise public awareness and understanding of social entrepreneurship as a viable approach to achieving sustainable development and the Millennium Development Goals, and as a potential solution to eradicating poverty.
2. To foster new and strategic partnerships between governments, multilateral organizations, social entrepreneurial NGOs and foundations, as well as companies and finance institutions in their shared interest to provide adequate services for the needy.
3. To encourage UN Member States to create national committees and focal points to commemorate the Year and implement national activities to promote social entrepreneurship.

4. To encourage finance institutions, investors and companies to more active engagement in social entrepreneurship.
5. To exchange best practices and innovative approaches to solving major social problems.
6. To expand the outreach and success of social entrepreneurship, in order to involve a greater number of people in the process of sustainable development.

To play our part, the Goi Peace Foundation, in cooperation with the Munich-based Earthrise Society—a newly established enterprise dedicated to advance social entrepreneurship and new innovative business models—intends to establish the International Alliance for Social Entrepreneurship. The aim of the Alliance is to strengthen the global social entrepreneurship movement and to harness partnerships between governments, multilateral institutions, social entrepreneurs and the corporate world. Also in this connection, creation of a Global Fund for Social Entrepreneurship is being planned to support the awareness-raising programs for social entrepreneurship, including promotional campaigns to launch an International Year for Social Entrepreneurship.

The Goi Peace Foundation is thus committed to raising the awareness for social entrepreneurship, and thereby, to the advancement of sustainable development and welfare of the human family.